

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 CU-02 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04

SIL-01 AID-05 SAJ-01 NIC-01 SAM-01 /100 W

----- 096062

R 180429Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5304

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AS, PT

SUBJECT: VISIT TO PORTUGUESE TIMOR BY AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY
AND UNOFFICIAL DELEGATIONS

1. SIX LABOR PARTY MEMBERS OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES LEFT SYDNEY MAR 17 FOR VISIT TO PORTUGUESE TIMOR TO LOOK INTO POLITICAL SITUATION IN TERRITORY. DELEGATION IS LED BY SECRETARY OF LABOR PARTY FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE, JOHN KERIN (NEW SOUTH WALES), AND INCLUDES SENATOR ARTHUR GIETZELT (NEW SOUTH WALES), KENNETH FRY (AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY), DR. RICHARD GUN (SOUTH AUSTRALIA), SENATOR G.D. MCINTOSH (WESTERN AUSTRALIA), AND GARETH CLAYTON (VICTORIA). THE DELEGATION REPORTEDLY PLANS TO TALK TO PORTUGUESE AND INDONESIAN OFFICIALS AND THE LEADERS OF MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE TERRITORY.

2. OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ANDREW PEACOCK, TOLD EMBASSY IN EARLY MARCH THAT HE WAS PLANNING VISIT TO PORTUGUESE TIMOR AND JAKARTA IN APRIL, BUT NO DATE HAS BEEN

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FIXED, AND THE TRIP MAY BE POSTPONED, DUE LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE IN

LIBERAL PARTY.

3. ON MARCH 11 A STRONGLY LEFTIST AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION LEFT FOR A VISIT TO PORTUGUESE TIMOR. INCLUDED WERE KEITH WILSON, SECRETARY OF THE NEWCASTLE TRADES HALL COUNCIL; MS. JILL JOLLIFFE, AUSTRALIAN UNION OF STUDENTS; JOHN BIRCH, OF AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY AID ABROAD; JAMES ROULSTON, VICTORIAN PRESIDENT OF THE AMALGAMATED METAL WORKERS UNION; WILLIAM WILLIAMS, DESCRIBED AS AN ABORIGINAL ACTIVIST FROM ADELAIDE; AND TIMOTHY ROWSE, LECTURER AT FLINDERS UNIVERSITY IN ADELAIDE.

4. COMMENT: RASH OF VISITS TO PORTUGUESE TIMOR BY POLITICALLY-ORIENTED GROUPS REFLECTS GROWING POLITICIZATION OF ISSUE. LABOR PARTY DELEGATION NOTED ABOVE IS COMPOSED OF CENTER AND LEFTIST ELEMENTS IN LABOR PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS, WHILE PRIVATE DELEGATION DESCRIBED IN PARA 3 ABOVE IS STRONGLY COMMUNIST-ORIENTED. IN REVIEW FOR EMBASSY OF DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR MAR 14 GRAHAM FEAKES (FIRST ASST SECRETARY, SOUTH EAST ASIA DIVISION, DFA) SAID THAT AUSTRALIAN LEFTIST SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR IS LARGELY WORK OF DENNIS FRENEY, MEMBER OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA (AARONS FACTION), RATHER THAN POSITION OF COMMUNIST PARTY AS A WHOLE. THIS LOOKS LIKE A RATHER SUPERFICIAL VIEW, AND LEFTIST PARTICIPATION IN LABOR PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION AND FRANKLY COMMUNIST-ORIENTED DELEGATION ABOVE INDICATES AUSTRALIAN LEFT WILL TAKE CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN TIMOR ISSUE.
HARROP

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